Lab wins six NNSA Pollution Prevention awards

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Honored for work in biofuels, water savings, and more

LOS ALAMOS, New Mexico, March 7, 2011 — Los Alamos National Laboratory has captured six 2010 National Nuclear Security Administration Pollution Prevention awards for projects ranging from energy savings to creating fuels from algae.

One Lab team earned a “Best in Class” award for changing the way it heats electroplating baths, saving enough energy to heat more than 14 homes for a year. Additional improvements will allow the team to recycle and reuse about 250,000 gallons of water annually, saving $1.2 million in treatment costs.

NNSA recognized LANL’s Algal Biofuels Consortium Development Team for its continued leadership in renewable energy research that will help bring biofuels to commercial reality. The Team formed the National Alliance for Advanced Biofuels and Bioproducts (NAABB), which secured funding from the Department of Energy to develop innovative technologies for cost-effective production of algal biomass and lipids, economically viable fuels and co-products, and a framework for a sustainable biofuels industry.

“I’m proud of the accomplishments that led to these Pollution Prevention awards,” said Kevin Smith, manager of NNSA’s Los Alamos Site Office. “These are the types of advancements that will lead to a better future and certainly demonstrate the Lab is being a steward of the environment.”

LANL captured six of NNSA’s 21 awards for 2010, including two Best in Class awards. A project called Sustainable Projects for a Sustainable Future won a Best in Class award for, among other things, community involvement in LANL’s third Energy Town Hall and starting a volunteer-run organic vegetable garden which supplied a Lab cafeteria.

Environmental Stewardship Awards went to projects that:

- Saved energy and cut greenhouse gas emissions by creating a video teleconferencing center,
- Integrated new DOE and NNSA sustainability goals into the Lab’s Environmental Management System, and
- Found a new technique to analyze plutonium that drastically reduces radioactive wastes.

“The great thing about these projects is that they came straight from the ingenuity of our employees,” said Chris Cantwell, associate director for Environment, Safety, Health, and Quality. “It’s a grass-roots thing that’s really taking off.”